

# Subsidy and Separatism

To the Editor:

Is it really true that most modern empires support their impoverished colonies at the expense of the relatively affluent center, as "In Domestic Soviet Trade, Russia Has the Most Chips" maintains (The Week in Review, Oct. 7).

It is true that Lenin after 1917 made a big point of changing the so-called "law of uneven development" that characterized earlier imperialisms and that subsequently the Central Asian republics gained at the expense of the Russian Republic. This Soviet policy has brought about some change in the behavior of neoimperialist powers, particularly in the period of the cold war. Foreign aid and foreign investment that resembles foreign aid, because it is eventually written off the books, are relatively new institutions.

What is interesting about the Plan Econ tables on subsidies by republic is that apparently Soviet policy has also been modified as a result of the changes brought about in World War II. The greatest recipients of subsidies from the Russian center have been those republics added as a result of the war, the three Baltic republics and Moldavia, presumably those with the least friendly populations. At the same time, less developed Turkmenia and Azerbaijan have received very little subsidy.

The Russians have correctly perceived the Lithuanians as the most problematic republic in the Soviet Union. And it is the one that has the most to lose from following a separatist path.

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